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Fall Education Issue

Detachment or Involvement?

by James J. Maguire

The Academic Mind

by Joseph M. Duffy, Jr.

THE COLUMNS ON JOYCE by Marvin Magalaner

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THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

—week by week—

REMOTE QUEMOY

FOR the most part, the American people appear to be blissfully unaware of the increasing peril in the China crisis. Two weeks ago these columns described this country's current China policy as "monstrous and unjustified." Since those words were written, the unwarranted risk of war over two Chinese offshore islands—*islands we are not committed to defend, and which are not strategically vital even to Formosa*—has been markedly aggravated.

The bombardment of Quemoy has been so severe and effective that American and Taiwan newsmen have had to be removed from the scene so that morale would not be impaired by widespread knowledge of the devastation that is taking place. The defenders of the island have been in such danger of being starved out by the Chinese Communist blockade that when a few American-escorted convoys got through it was widely hailed. The firepower of Soviet-supplied shore batteries is proving to be greatly superior to the American weapons of the defending troops from Taiwan.

Visitors who have talked to Chinese Communist leaders in recent weeks have found them to be supremely confident of victory. Wholesale training-measures setting China on the way to a wartime footing have been announced. In their public declarations and in the negotiations at Warsaw, the Chinese continue most unyielding. American intervention will hardly induce them to abandon their future objective of Taiwan in return for Chiang's demilitarization of Quemoy and Matsu.

Consider the military potentialities. The 7th Fleet now in Formosan waters is said to represent the strongest naval force ever assembled in one place. But this is more than offset by its proximity to new Chinese airfields with a reported complement of 2,000 jets—enough to knock out several naval

squadrons, if not also the American airbases nearby. Communist China has unlimited manpower, literally millions of soldiers it considers expendable, as it demonstrated as recently as the Korean war. Only the nuclear weapons possessed by the fleet represent any margin of superiority, and if American forces should resort to these, a worldwide nuclear war could result. At the very least, if American forces should use nuclear weapons, the United States, proclaimed defender of human freedom, would find itself an outcast among its allies and the uncommitted peoples of the world. America's vaunted military superiority in Formosan waters is therefore largely illusory.

THERE IS a further consideration about our present Chinese position that has been receiving too scant attention. What are the reasons behind the general harshness and belligerency of the reply of Mr. Khrushchev to Mr. Eisenhower, which the President rejected as unacceptable? Is it merely that the Soviets want to proclaim the unassailable firmness of their support for their ally? There is something ominously familiar about the whole pattern.

The crisis over Quemoy actually presents the U.S.S.R. with its biggest chance yet to get the United States, its principal enemy and the defender of the free world, embroiled in a major conflict—with someone else. At the same time it would not be wholly unwelcome to the masters of the Kremlin that Communist China (as well as America) would emerge from such a conflict greatly weakened. No less real for being in the background is the Mao-Khrushchev rivalry for world Communist leadership, plus the potential rivalry between the two empires when China at last achieves its industrialization. And Chinese Communist leaders themselves

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welcome a situation which facilitates the imposition of their new "people's communes" and other instruments of greater totalitarian control upon a restive populace.

Hence there is little hope of a solution either from appeals to Moscow or the direct negotiations in Warsaw. Sentiment is growing that the case should therefore be brought before the United Nations. But even this idea seems impractical. The Chinese Communists would not consider for an instant permitting an organization from which they are blackballed and which accords the Chinese Nationalists a permanent seat on its Security Council to pass judgment on their case.

Suppose that by some unforeseeable circumstances America's bluff is not called and Quemoy and Matsu do not change hands at this time. What will have been gained, beyond a grudging respect for American strength and firmness? A short respite, perhaps, and then, strengthened still more, the Chinese Communists will again reach out for the nearby offshore islands. What will have been lost by a successful American show of strength supported by the possession of nuclear weapons? One result will unfailingly be the alienation of uncommitted Afro-Asian peoples, as well as important elements in the various nations in Europe and elsewhere whom we regard as our allies.

In view of the frightful risk the United States is taking in Formosan waters over distant islands of such minor significance, and the dubious results that can be expected at best, only one course would now seem feasible. Quemoy and Matsu are clearly not the place for a showdown with the Communists. If the forces of the free world are to succeed, as they must, in thwarting the Communist drive for world domination, they have to know where and when to keep their powder dry. Self-restraint in Chinese waters will have its hard and humiliating aspects. But as far as Quemoy and Matsu are concerned, the only policy for the United States that will sustain hard-headed examination is one of disengagement, however adroitly it may be disguised.

MR. KHRUSHCHEV'S LATEST ROLE

WITH HIS LATEST discourse on Soviet education Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev follows in the path of his most prominent predecessor. Although there are still noticeable differences between Mr. Khrushchev and Stalin, they are less marked than they were immediately after the thunderous

denunciation of Stalin during the Twentieth Congress. And the increasing resemblance between the two is seldom more obvious than when one considers the vast areas of human activity to which their statements apply. Stalin was not content to be acknowledged as political ruler; he wanted to be known as a political theorist, as a scientific arbiter, as a critic of music and art, as a military strategist—as, in other words, a universal genius.

Mr. Khrushchev has not yet reached the same lofty pinnacle which would allow him to take all knowledge—and all human activity—for his province, but he seems to be well on his way. His new role of educational theorist is, assuredly, not his last. Nor, considering the direction of his comments, should one be surprised or impressed at the ease with which he played the part.

That some people will be impressed is clear, however, from the musings of one well-known columnist who, apropos of Mr. Khrushchev's statement, wrote: "I was a bit envious of the seriousness with which top Russian leaders take their educational system. Where but in Russia will you find the head of state writing a long discourse on educational philosophy and organization, after a debate lasting several months between leading officials and educators?"

The naiveté which prompts such a comment is more disconcerting than engaging, for the "educational philosophy" which lies behind Mr. Khrushchev's "suggestion" is simple and the concept of a real "debate" is ludicrous. Mr. Khrushchev summed up his philosophy admirably in the slogan which he proposed: "That all children must prepare for useful labor and participation in the building of Communist society." And lest this be misunderstood he offered his opinion that "all pupils without exception should be involved in socially useful labor in industry or on collective farms after they finish seven or eight grades of school."

The "educational philosophy" here is not only that education is for use—to build a particular kind of society—but that the expanding Russian industry needs manpower, and education is a clearly secondary matter.

The United States has an educational system with serious faults, as the recent spate of criticism has made quite clear, but it is not yet so determined by narrowly interpreted needs of our society that a real education is impossible. The pressure of such needs is, of course, evident in the United States at this time, but we have, fortunately, critics to recall us to the great liberal, humanistic tradition of the West.

THE POPE TO EDUCATORS

IT IS ALWAYS interesting, if frequently disheartening, to note the difference in spirit between Papal statements on world peace and the opinions of some Catholic commentators in the United States. The approach of the modern Popes to the problems of world peace has always been at once practical and what—if it came from someone else—some Catholic editors would denounce as visionary. Thus while certain sections of the Catholic press in this country keep busy denouncing the U.N. and decrying “do-gooders” and “glo-baloney,” Papal statements on world peace have always placed great stress on the need for international organization and for international measures of social reform which aim at improving conditions in the underdeveloped countries.

Recently Pope Pius returned to this latter theme, a favorite of his, in an address to Roman Catholic educators from eleven countries. The need of the underdeveloped countries, the Pope said, is one of the great problems of our time, and it is one for which Catholic schools should prepare their students. Solving the problem of poverty in a world of plenty is not easy; solutions require both technical knowledge and moral vigor. The Catholic schools should therefore see to it, said the Pope, that they produce an elite with “such just ideas and such largeness of heart” that they will be able to face and solve these problems.

These remarks by Pope Pius have relevance, of course, for Catholic educational efforts in all parts of the world. But we hope that they will be taken to heart in particular by Catholic colleges and universities of the United States. If Catholic educators will continue to listen to Pope Pius rather than to some of the more right-wing editors and columnists, the graduates of Catholic colleges in this country will be prepared to play their proper part in efforts to bring justice and charity to bear on the problem of the underdeveloped areas.

SOUTHERN PARENTS

AS FAR FROM settlement as ever, seemingly, is the question of what this school year will mean in the struggle over integration in Arkansas and Virginia.

In Little Rock, for instance, all parties in the school dispute are planning legal moves and counter-moves to meet every possible eventuality. The anticipated “no” vote on the referendum to in-

tegrate Little Rock’s schools—that is, a “yes” vote by less than a majority of “qualified voters,” not of those voting—is expected to be challenged by integrationists as based on an illegal manipulation of the term “majority.” And even if the “no” vote is upheld, the maintenance by means of public funds of “private” segregated schools has already been denounced as illegal by a group of Little Rock lawyers and is sure to be challenged in court. Furthermore, whatever the outcome of these contests, it is quite possible that the School Board may refuse to turn the schools over to the “private corporation” set up by segregationists as a means of evading the Supreme Court directive. For if the Board should relinquish the schools to such a corporation, its harassed members may find themselves held in contempt by the Court.

The prospect is for a long and painful period of legal wrangling, with parents and their children the chief victims of the educational disorder. A white mother in Front Royal, Virginia, quoted in the *N.Y. Times*, put into words the feelings of most of those involved, apparently, when she told the reporter she was “angry and upset and sick at heart about the whole thing.” Many of the affected students, including a majority in at least one Little Rock high school, are deploring the interruption of their studies and asking that the schools be reopened, “even,” as they put it, if Negroes are admitted.

Growing parental concern over the price of segregation, especially in terms of the educational welfare of the children, may prove to be a decisive factor in resolving the current impasse. The legal battles will have to be fought, no doubt, but the most important advance may well reside in the changing attitudes of Southern parents.

FISH STORY

WE’RE TROUBLED by an item we feel is important but which simply defies classification. Should we file it under *Journalism*, *Catholic*, *Observance*, *religious*? Or maybe *Technology*, *food*? Does it belong under *L* for letter or *S* for spirit?

We’re referring to a news story, in one of the diocesan papers, on the scientific breakthrough which will enable us to eat fish products that taste just like meat. Along with the news story, as might be expected, is an ad, saying: “*NOW . . . for the first time . . . YOU CAN EAT HOT DOGS ON FRIDAY!*”

Detachment or Involvement?

Some apologists have maintained that intellectual and scientific achievement is peripheral, if not irrelevant, to the main stream of Catholic concern

by JAMES J. MAGUIRE

WITHIN THE PAST YEAR the general Sputnik-inspired discussion of the problem of scientific creativity has focused further attention on that American Catholic lack of intellectual and scientific achievement first revealed by Monsignor John Tracy Ellis and later publicized by Father John J. Cavanaugh of Notre Dame. It had been bad enough to realize that we were small frogs in the American scientific pond: it was devastating to learn that the pond itself was not overly impressive.

As a consequence of all this, apologists for Catholic achievements to date have chosen to speak out, rather more frankly than usual, on the subject of "first things first." Intellectual and scientific achievement, they say, is peripheral, if not irrelevant, to the main stream of Catholic concern: no more meaning can be attached to Monsignor Ellis's statistics than to a count of Catholic noses in any other profession or trade group. Some even argued that a shortage of Catholic scientists would reflect nothing more than a normal Catholic preoccupation with theological and philosophical issues.

Whether or not this could be termed the prevalent Catholic reaction I am not sure; what I do know is that while Catholic audiences have long been accustomed to nose-counting of Catholics in the most specialized fields (I think, for example, of a college classmate whose talk on "Catholic Heroes of the Revolutionary War" made him one of the most popular of Holy Name speakers), most Catholic audiences would accept this resolute affirmation of the primacy of the spiritual as self-evident and axiomatic. The apologia for things as they are seems to embody a robust other-worldliness that is its own guarantee and that precludes further discussion.

Father Maguire is a member of the Religion department at the University of Notre Dame.

One feels the strength of this position; yet it is hard to avoid the conviction that there is much more to be said on the issue. For one thing, this sudden high-mindedness about pragmatic considerations is a reversal. I can remember strong apologetic use being made of this measure of Catholic achievement in various fields as far back as when I was a senior in high school. Was there never any value in this sort of argument?

Creative achievement, of course, is not a sign of personal sanctity, nor can it be taken as an index of the real spiritual condition of the group. Cautiously applied, however, this criterion can tell us a good deal about the standards and attitudes of the group and about the character of the doctrine which inspires it. It is rather like publication as an index of the caliber of a university's teaching. There is no direct and infallible correlation. Publication is certainly peripheral to the teaching function which is the main concern of the university; yet a university that appealed to the primacy of teaching as an excuse for its poor publication record would be engaging in a quite misleading oversimplification. Good teaching requires continuous study and meditation. The law of averages suggests that men who follow this course faithfully will occasionally come up with fresh ideas and insights worth passing along. Measured over a long period of time and with due allowance for accidental factors, therefore, statistics about publication are meaningful.

STRICTLY SPEAKING, this parallel might seem to apply directly only to the matter of clerical and professional publication in theology and philosophy. Yet it is not difficult to see how it would also apply to artistic achievement.

Those commentators have surely been right who assert that Catholic eminence in artistic fields testifies to a certain harmony between the doctrine of the

Church and human needs and aspirations. A long-range lack of such achievement might make us wonder if Catholic doctrine were properly understood, whereas Puritan divines in the same situation might have felt that lack of artistic achievement was a healthy indication. The important point here is that artistic achievement does have significance either positive or negative, precisely because such endeavor does involve the whole man. It cannot be regarded as a routine exercise divorced from the well-springs of personal and spiritual endowment.

Might it be said, however, that intellectual achievement in general and scientific achievement in particular do not have this kind of relevance? That religiously speaking they are as neutral as skill in bricklaying or eminence in professional sports? This does appear to be the contention; and if it be true that such achievement represents nothing more than a high degree of specialized training and competence, it would follow that nose-counting of Catholics would be nothing more than a silly kind of "our gang" loyalty.

Much of the support for this contention is based on a misunderstanding—a misunderstanding shared, it must be said, by many intellectual and scientific workers—of that detached objectivity proper to the scientific method. This error has led to the concept of a totally unimaginative, infinitely labored, mole-like burrowing as the ideal of research. The growing realization that this is indeed a misunderstanding, that there is a genuine distinction between the creative scientist and the merely routine scientific worker is one of the happier by-products of the Sputnik discussion. Actually this is not a new distinction. Poincaré, for example, pointed out long ago that the actual progress of science had by no means been accomplished by the laborious induction suggested by Bacon. The difference between the men who get the insights and formulate the hypotheses and those who merely verify and apply them is abundantly illustrated by history.

The mark of the potentially creative scientist, according to Doctor Gustav Martin, is his constant search for meaning and relatedness even in fragmentary pieces of information: the spark of creativity is the passionate insistence that each fragment of knowledge be "incorporated into and assigned its proper place in the overall framework of the total ordered universe." This hinges, furthermore, according to Professor Heisenberg, on "faith in our task in this world." What they seem to be saying is that the work of the creative scientist, like that of the genuine intellectual, entails a personal involvement, a sense that the search is vital to the worker's identification as a person and an obligation independent of his personal whim and fancy.

THIS PICTURE is, of course, an idealized version of the intellectual. However, the relative proportion

of genuine intellectuals on the one hand and the mere skilled intellectual or scientific technicians on the other is quite irrelevant to this discussion. The point is that genuine intellectual dedication is not a spiritually neutral matter. An intense, urgent search for meaning and relatedness in the external, sensible universe becomes either a key to spiritual growth or a snare and a distraction of the worst kind, depending upon one's philosophic outlook.

Viewed in this light, the contention that a Catholic outlook will induce a certain detachment from scientific concern is very curious indeed. If it be asserted that science (and if natural science why not social science too?) is "materialistic" and that a proper Catholic will gradually be weaned away from such un-spiritual concerns, the emphasis is much too weak. If it be taken as a casual exaggeration, capable of being modified when useful by any of a half dozen rationalizations, it is dangerously misleading, for it lends support to a view of the temporal world that has devastating implications not only for Catholic intellectualism but for the Christian philosophy of work, the positive conception of marriage and the whole issue of lay spirituality.

In saying this, I am not arbitrarily reading dire meanings into casual apologetical utterances. The viewpoint premised in this apologia for Catholic shortcomings reflects perfectly that Neo-Platonic current which swelled from Augustine to Aquinas and which is apparently still strong enough to condition our everyday philosophic climate.

The basic contention of Neo-Platonism was that this was a world of shadow and not of substance, that matter was somehow a principle of negation. Finite forms might be a reflection of the divine but true knowledge, knowledge of the kind that mattered, was not to be gained from such flickering shadows. The Platonic notion of earthly existence as a banishment and an exile rang especially true to a Christian world that had the memory of the persecutions, the immediate travail of the dying Roman Empire and the impending prospect of barbarian invasion. Nor did the subsequent Dark Ages offer much reason for changing the verdict that earthly existence was hardly more than a prolonged stay in a bad inn. Augustine's own description of the soul as a spirit imprisoned for a time in a body is highly significant; it sums up perfectly the theme that to find his true self a man had to turn inward, away from material things, and that contact with sensible things was not an occasion of growth but the condition of man's exile.

If one accepts this line of thought, the Christian will find little to concern or interest him in the material world. But as far as lay spirituality is concerned, the devastating implication here is that all temporal concerns are reduced to the level of so many games. The lessons that need to be learned are learned not so much

through the positive challenges of everyday achievement or experience but in spite of them. In this view of things, in fact, the real lesson is that nothing of value can be learned from external sensible reality; growth is not a matter of assimilation but of detachment. The only vitally important things are that the layman as a passenger observe the simple rules designed for his safety, make no attempt to interfere with the navigation and show the proper spirit of co-operation toward the crew and other passengers.

Few men can live for long under conditions that make their personal concerns seem as so much childish make-believe. In troubled times, when life in this world does not appear very attractive, the problem hardly becomes acute. However, the strain did begin to show in the 13th century's sense of guilt, which left its traces in the Canon of the Mass; it was clearly apparent in the 15th century's truly morbid obsession with death. Ultimately, Neo-Platonism leads either to the spread of monasticism or to secularism. For our present purposes, Luther's answer to this challenge is particularly interesting, because one of his primary concerns was the idea that the layman seemed condemned to second-class citizenship and because he tried to solve this impasse without abandoning the framework of Augustinian Platonism.

THEOLOGICALLY, Luther's most striking innovation was the denial of the distinction between priest and people. Each man was to be his own priest and his own navigator; it is commonly supposed that by doing so "Luther provided a new dignity and importance to the tasks of the common man." Yet, as the Reverend Mr. William Graham Cole goes on to observe, there is a "curious twist" involved, in that "Luther's doctrine of the sanctity of all work is obviously more naturalistic than Thomism . . . yet his justification by faith is considerably less naturalistic in its attitude toward the world and its inhabitants."

The explanation of the paradox is that Luther did not really teach that work has a spiritual significance but rather that, spiritually speaking, one work is as good as another. If all "good works" are equally worthless, there is no more value in the asceticism of the monk or the speculations of the scholastic than in household tasks or the work of the craftsman. In short, the leveling consequent on the exaggerated supernaturalism of the "total depravity" doctrine does seem at first glance to lend a new dignity to everyday work, but the real conclusion is that no work as such has any intrinsic significance.

Luther's doctrine is interesting in the present connection chiefly because it serves as a warning. The ease with which liberal Protestantism merges into secularism is due to the fact that naturalistic-sounding affirmations about work find no real support in the

framework of exaggerated supernaturalism and can be quite readily detached from it. This essential weakness should impress upon us the necessity of placing our own teaching on lay spirituality in the philosophic framework it really demands; it should also illustrate the fact that exaggerating the role of grace can be quite as bad as underestimating it.

The prime element lacking in all variations on the Neo-Platonic theme is the concept of a task to be performed in this world, not merely during the time of one's stay in this world, but somehow through the very instrumentality of the things of this world, a task which—in certain circumstances—might make attachment rather than detachment the higher virtue. Such a concept would seem to flow from the Thomist stress on the reality of material things, their actual casual action, the nature of the human soul as the form of the body, the empirical basis of knowledge and the idea that the proper object of the human intellect is the essence of material things. Redemption is the central fact for St. Thomas, but the natural order has neither been destroyed by original sin nor nullified by grace. There is no suggestion that sensible reality is *maya* or illusion, or that the human soul is in this world as an alien spirit eking out the terms of an unnatural condition. Man does not come into this world "trailing clouds of glory"; he comes in with a soul that is a "blank tablet" needing the objects and experiences of this world for its own growth and development.

THIS IS a very startling doctrine; it is not surprising that its implications have only gradually been realized. What it means is that life is not a time of waiting but of growth and that the ordinary man discovers his true self not by the general path of detachment from the things of sense, as St. Augustine seemed to think, but rather by a series of concrete involvements. This, I take it, is the line of thought pursued by Gabriel Marcel and Christian existentialists generally; Father Karl Rahner, S.J., suggests a parallel line of thought, or at least a critical review of the whole Neo-Platonist assumption, as the first requisite for an adequate theology of death.

Equally startling is the positive concept of the married relationship which can be drawn from Thomistic principles—even though Thomas himself, convinced that women, youth and drunken people suffer from a "defect of reason," never did arrive at it. The crucial notion is that the love given to one's partner is not necessarily subtracted from the love given to God, that the physical involvement itself can be a means rather than an obstacle to spiritual growth. Putting together several texts of Thomas on insensibility, Father Messenger ventures to assert that (given the proper conditions) "the effect of pleasure and passion is to heighten and increase the moral goodness of the

act, not in any way to diminish it." In any case, there seems to be agreement that one can give oneself completely to God precisely *through* one's partner. This is taken (though somewhat rashly) as the distinguishing mark of lay spirituality.

Actually, this positive concept of the married relationship is simply one application of the larger principle. Man's basic task, says St. Augustine, is to know God and to know himself: but as St. Thomas pointed out against Augustine, the soul does not know itself directly but only in its acts. Man does not uncover his personality, he forms it: he forms it in the process of taking a stand vis-à-vis the external world that impinges upon him. He finds his measure of self-identification by locating himself in some context of relationships. For those accustomed to the appealing fuzziness of Platonic other-worldliness, this may sound naturalistic. Actually the important difference is that we are speaking not of "person" but of "personality." Naturalists, of course, equate the two.

The fact that each man must carve out his own living room of meaning and relatedness is the key to the spiritual significance of intellectual and scientific creativity. Even for the seemingly most unintellectual, rationality is the measuring rod. Everyman's private world is a world of order and intelligibility. One way or another, he will secure this. If necessary he will do so at the price of sacrificing contact with the external world. Or he will do so in a less drastic way by desensitizing himself, in greater or less degree, to reality that he cannot assimilate.

This latter possibility brings us to the man on the assembly line who is condemned to the endless repetition of a routine operation. This problem cannot be dismissed with the easy statement that men should take this as an occasion of penance and mortification. Long-suffering faith is the individual's answer to this, as it is to other crises, but the situation itself cannot be justified that easily. The individual ought to be able to find some degree of meaning and personal satisfaction in his occupation.

The larger implications of this Christian humanism are beyond the scope available here, but I believe enough has been said to establish the connection between the work of the genuine intellectual and the common man's search for a context in which he can find himself as a person. The first is simply an extension of the second, pursued in a broader framework and with more sophisticated techniques. Both are premised on the philosophical position that the search for meaning in the temporal order is not a snare and a delusion, that it is still God's world challenging our understanding and calling for a positive response.

The creative worker is precisely the one who is concerned with the overall pattern. To dismiss this concern on the ground that the formulas of the Faith or of philosophy make such details unnecessary is to dismiss the whole problem of temporal concern and its implications for lay spirituality. To reduce all intellectual and scientific work to the level of routine competence is to brush aside the whole notion of a Christian philosophy of work.

LEARNING LANGUAGES

An Impertinent Proposal

by LEO HINES

EXCESSIVE LIBERALISM has, incontrovertibly, vitiated most areas of American education. But the bitterness which prevails among critics of this liberalism raises the danger inherent in most popular reactions, that is, the danger of becoming injudicious and categoric. By this I mean that there is currently a possibility that we will too quickly reject all of educational modernism because we dislike most of it, the possibility that we will not recognize that modernism, for all its fundamental errors, has made valuable contributions to our schools.

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Judging by popular literature on the subject, we are now beset by a most naive and uncritical nostalgia. We look longingly back to the days of the three R's and the McGuffey Reader as if the generations produced by these systems were swarming with men and women of intellectual power. Nothing could be more untrue. Early twentieth century education was, if anything, less efficient and less humanizing than mid-twentieth century American education. True, discipline was a strong point, stronger than it is today. Granted also that the classical high schools covered considerably more ground in terms of grammar and dictionary work than most comparable schools today. But may I ask what,

precisely, were the values inculcated by this early twentieth century academic world? That this world produced hard-working, sober and industrious people one is ready to admit. But were there other values than the personal discipline of the student, either achieved or even sought after?

If one considers involvement with literature and the arts—and one must—as norms for the educated person, where, one asks, are the educated among the middle-aged generation which so contemns contemporary education? Where in that generation are the readers of history, of poetry, of philosophy? Boston no longer has an opera house; the Met will sing in a movie theater. The Plymouth, the Copley, the Majestic and half a dozen other theaters in Boston have become movie houses or worse. And at the Museum of Fine Arts and the Jack Gardner Palace it is not the generation of the three R's which flocks in for the Niarchos collection and the other displays, it is the same generation as Marlon Brando's and Elvis Presley's, God help us. This must be said flatly: the educational system which produced the present middle-aged generation was, culturally, a flop.

STILL, I am not compelled to embrace contemporary education as the only alternative. I want something that is less crass and *Wissenschaft* than the last generation, and something more disciplined, traditional and cultural than the present generation offers. I would like to see high schools where a gifted student can graduate with a competent reading fluency in Latin and Greek and in at least two modern languages. If this ideal seems now hilariously visionary, it only serves to show how inept, how stingy-minded and pusillanimous we have become.

As to the worth of such a high school course, I could only reply with a defense of the classical tradition in its entirety, and that I am not here prepared to give. As to its feasibility, I must stubbornly insist that what other generations have done, we can do too. Surely we have some students today who are comparable, if not to John Milton, at least to many of John Milton's classmates. There must be a few who can become, if they are educated to it, much more literate and ranging and in a word humanistic than any the secondary school in this country is now producing.

The cry has been that our schools have been busy with the sciences and social studies and the classics have had to yield. This was a deceit. The sciences are not being well taught. And ask any honest high school senior, practically anywhere, to evaluate his social studies courses and you will almost invariably get a derisive grimace in return. In short, we are frittering away our student's valuable time. We are perpetually attenuating, modifying, abridging and cutting out.

What do we give in return? Even in the best classi-

cal prep schools and public Latin schools in the country, what are we returning to the student for having truncated his study syllabus so? One thing only, and that of great value: improved methods of instruction. It cannot be gainsaid. Somewhere in this country today every ancient and modern discipline is being taught superbly well, with color, imagination, fire and skill. Films, tape recorders, field trips and some brilliant textbooks are being used to produce knowledge, understanding and proficiency of an excellence even beyond the ken of the McGuffey Reader schools.

But if the *quomodo* is advancing by leaps and bounds, why does the *id quod*, the stuff and matter of education, continue to be puny and skimpy? Why, for instance, if you question a prep-school graduate who has had three, perhaps even five years, of very good, enlightened, French instruction, does he go blank at the names of François Villon, Ronsard, Racine, Molière, and so on? Clearly, while he has much more facility with the language than his peer of thirty years ago, he is ignorant of literature.

MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING, particularly, has undergone a veritable revolution. The day of unrealistic prescriptive grammars is gone, and the stupid memorization of lists of idioms is, thanks be, over. Students learn now through the senses, and far from being an ephemeral fashion, this is solid psychological methodology, with a long tradition to confirm its solidity. But we have had enough familiarity with the method to have become adepts, and the fact must be faced that the modern language courses, in colleges as well as in high schools, are not giving the student enough of the language's literature.

There are three reasons why this is so. One is that the prospective teacher must spend so much time in college or normal school learning and perfecting the method, that he is himself, often, inadequately rehearsed in the literary tradition of his language. A damning accusation. Two, the leaders in modern methodology are usually utilitarians, who sincerely, according to their lights, put more value on "*Voilà le crayon*" than on "*Où sont les neiges d'antan?*" The third reason why literature is skimmed is more defensible, and more soluble. It is that the teacher has nowhere near enough time, in the classroom, or study time allotted to his pupils, to make a real or true entry into his subject matter. He can, he protests, only "show them the way," and hope that later on they will while away their leisure hours thumbing amiably over the classics. This is, of course, mere dreaming.

But how is the problem soluble? Where find time to inculcate the all-hallowed "method" and also teach literature? The language teacher has protested right along that four or five hours a week, spread over as many days, is an arrangement by nature inimical to

his intention, which is to immerse the student, to throw him into the water, to jettison the idea of translation so utterly that the student never makes the mistake of believing that he can think in English first and then translate. The army language schools were successful for many reasons, but one of them was that the prospective linguist spoke and heard French or Italian or whatever all day long! Not from ten to eleven on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc.

Why can we not approximate these conditions in the schools? Why are we so bound to the one hour a day method, for every subject? What is so sacred about it? There have been numerous educational systems, from Plato's and Aristotle's to the medieval monasteries to the Renaissance universities where whole years indeed were devoted to single broad areas: poetry, the sciences, theology, *et al.*, with results no less impressive than our present results.

IF THE READER has not already dismissed the proposal as fantastic let him envision a classical high school which devotes all the first quarter of freshman year to the learning of a living language! Small classes with three or four teachers working in the most exact harmony. One instructor at nine teaching oral skills; a movie at ten *sans* English titles—story movies, professional motion pictures; an hour of laboratory; more classroom work. The language all day long. After three or four weeks the various teachers could start lecturing on the history of the country, its geography and customs, and please, please have someone tell them that the language has poetry, drama, novels. Every language has lyrics as plain and as rich as Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods," and we have not the right indefinitely to suspend such knowledge from the intelligent youth. They can be assimilated within a month after he has started his language. As days progress recreations can be held, occasionally, in the language. A French teacher I know would have forty or fifty trooping into the playing fields after school to learn "*le soccer*" with all its tricks and with all its vocabulary, and learning thus through the senses and from the live experience, learning the structure of French, and beyond that its very form. Seminaries from time immemorial have facilitated the use of Latin—pidgin Latin to be sure—by just such expedients.

At the end of the first quarter I defy any supervisor not to find that *some* of the students are very, very facile in the language. Ready to read. Ready to go back to our normal curriculum, with classes, now completely and easily in the language, one hour per day. In sophomore year the first quarter could be given over to another modern language, based substantially on the same program. By the middle of second year, I foolishly hope, he would be able to attend two different classes given entirely in foreign tongues. By third year a

classical language could be started. And the "direct" methods are not totally useless even here. Both Boston College and Boston College High School, under the guidance of Professor Malcolm McLeod of the Classics Department, have already made careful experiments in this direction, replete with films, phonograph records and the rest. Their results have been encouraging, enough so to continue very hopefully.

IN THE Jesuit High School I attended, one teacher had some such idea as my present one, though perhaps less consciously formulated, for he had us reading, from the first months of Latin, the famous Gospels and Psalms: St. Luke on the Birth of Christ, the Twenty-second Psalm. It was easy. There was no translation. We knew the English version well enough to guess, intelligently and usually with accuracy, the occasional strange word. Caesar and Cicero still remained relatively difficult, but, and this was very important, by the time we reached those authors we had acquired, first, a fair basic vocabulary, and, second, an invaluable self-confidence, a "feel," if you will, of the Latin language.

There was also the advantage, because of easy texts, of having learned how to discover the meanings of words from context, rather than merely, exclusively, looking through dictionaries.

The teacher also spoke some Latin in class. He was half-deliberately using the modern direct method. I have forgotten many of them, but once I could describe a key, a cassock, a loud-speaker, a desk, etc., in fair pidgin Latin. The experiment was not thoroughly prosecuted, but it might have been. I had enough at least to know that my confidence, my boldness, in reading Latin was founded strong, and that confidence has always far exceeded my feelings towards Greek and French, which were taught by more grammatical, less "direct" methods.

In summary, then, a student in such a system would have graduated from high school having put behind him one whole annual quarter to each of four languages, perhaps in this order: Freshman French, Sophomore Italian, Junior Latin, and Senior German or Greek. If the thing were done right a good student would be reading these languages with considerable ease. He would truly be ready for college literature courses, and a lifetime of work in the liberal arts, as a professional, or as a workaday college graduate who spends his leisure reading.

What of the sciences, and history? With a whole quarter gone out of each year how would the teachers have time to cover their material? For one thing there is no reason why the students could not be started in the eighth grade, thereby making up the lost year. And for another, why can't the sciences have whole quarters too?

The Academic Mind

by JOSEPH M. DUFFY, JR.

AT THE OUTSET it may be appropriate to remark that as opposed to the type of academic mind that is meditative, cautious, and scholarly there is the type that is cantankerous and recklessly speculative. Another characteristic, at least of certain academics, as Morton Zabel wrote not long ago of some critics, is a willingness to conduct their education in public. It is with these observations firmly in mind, then, that I presume to delineate the academic mind in general.

The subject is a complex one, for the academic mind has many aspects. A psychologist writing on this topic might probe the subliminal areas in an attempt to discover what seedbed of infant wounds and childhood anxieties customarily fathers the academic man. Or an anthropologist might examine academic folkways to pattern the tribal customs, beliefs and games. But I am baffled by the psychology of the academic and I am too close to the dingy lower-middle-class academic garden to study objectively the bloom in that environment. Instead I am obliged to rely on the personal and haphazard observations of an involved spectator.

I hope I shall not be interpreted as mixing fantasy with life or charged with frivolousness when I note first of all the most impressive common quality of the academic mind: the practical uselessness of its operation. If the general public more widely recognized this quality as basic, there would be no more admiration for the academic mind, perhaps, but certainly there would be fewer unrealizable demands made upon it. At present the ordinary American view is, I suspect, that if only the academic would overcome his laziness or indifference or eccentricity, he might do something useful. He might, in brief, become as much of an asset to society (and possibly as prosperous) as a doctor or a lawyer.

It follows that for the interested public—the alumni and the successful members of the community—the most congenial inhabitants of the academy are the coaches from the athletic office, the officers of the school of business, perhaps a convivial speech teacher or two, and solid individuals from departments of applied science (those who, in the opinion of the academy itself, circle lusterlessly around its periphery).

The fact is that the academic mind may disappear altogether from our society, but it cannot be changed

into a profitable commodity. Outside the academic world a variety of immediately useful goods and services (or those which can be advertised as useful) are offered by professional and business men. The doctor evidently strives for the healing of his patients, the merchant offers a product for consumption, and the clergyman aims for the spiritual well-being of his flock. But the academic, when he solves an equation or researches a historical subject or analyzes a novel, accomplishes only the completion of his problem.

ALTHOUGH A useful result may ultimately be achieved through the application of his ideas by another (the role of applied science may be given as a patent example here), his work is immediately useless. Indeed, it ought to be insisted that whenever an academic performs a useful job, he is acting in non-academic fashion and the academic mind is not involved.

Too frequently today, however, it is precisely the non-academic performance that is looked for from the academic mind, and the member of the academy is esteemed only in proportion to his non-academic achievement: the crass elevation of the technician, Wernher von Braun, and the insensitive jettisoning of Robert Oppenheimer by the Administration (and by the public) illustrates this confused state of mind. Moreover, inasmuch as the academy is also a place where knowledge is communicated, where, that is, students are taught, it is popularly believed—by the government, by parents, by students themselves—that a useful result will come about from four or more years' residence at a college or university. These expectations of practical good range from the grandiose—absolute scientific security of the United States against its enemies—to the naive—improvement through cultural stimulus of the repartee at cocktail parties. That in many cases much practical good does occur is not a tribute to the efficiency of American universities and their faculties but a symptom of their decline as academic institutions.

Perhaps because literature is a more patently useless subject than most or perhaps only because I am more familiar with it, I shall turn to the novel to illustrate my topic. When a teacher of fiction presents *Wuthering Heights* to a class, he introduces them to an object which will obviously not bring them any practical

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benefit. Unless the sense of the novel is distorted, it cannot be said to have any positive religious values except on a thoroughly pagan and pantheistic level.

The book's anarchistic strain, if taken seriously, would hardly provoke its readers to better citizenship. And only the most anachronistic laissez-faire capitalist would praise Heathcliff's free-booting financial schemes as models for today's young business men. *Wuthering Heights* could be a very bad influence on readers who came to it for practical benefit, for it is an amoral and half-mad work. Nevertheless, for the enjoyment of its beauty, many class hours may be given to this book or to similar ones; and in such useless fashion the academic passes a lifetime of reading, talking, and writing.

IN ORDER to perceive better the image of the academic mind which we are constructing, we must envisage the place where that mind may operate at its most successful uselessness. This place is more than a comfortable physical location or a congenial atmosphere. It is as well a set of intangible circumstances, combining to produce tranquillity and refinement, a timeless ivory tower, if you wish, raised up in a rare climate purified of the quotidian excesses of the world of business, the professions, and politics. In this place, which is, above all, a place of freedom, error may flourish as well as truth.

Once again, in this accommodation of error (which is not the same as encouragement) we face the disparity between what the academic mind is and what it requires for its health and what the public considers it should be and should require. It would be unfair to claim that the academic mind is bemused by error, but it does have, because of its own great experience—personal and historical—with failures and false starts, a tolerance found nowhere else for hard-fought error.

For example, the academic will sit down comfortably with a Communist (or let us say heretic if the academic happens also to be a clergyman) who may have something important to say on a particular subject. Under such circumstances the academic mind is at ease, is not terrified nor made angry by the externals of ideology. But in a similar situation the business mind will complacently or irritably turn away from the unorthodox, the political mind will denounce it to the voters, and the clerical mind will pray for its conversion. This freedom of the academic mind, ridiculous and offensive as it may seem to the wide world, can not be taken away—nor ever eroded—if the academic mind itself is to survive.

At the same time the maintenance of this freedom may be an urgent source of tension between the faculty and the administration of a university and, in turn, between the administration and the prosperous conventional voices of the alumni. Several years ago, in a letter to this writer, Lawrence Chamberlain, then

Dean of Columbia College, underlined with noble brevity this necessary freedom for the academy. The issue was the presence of the Communist editor, John Gates, as speaker on the Columbia campus.

Previously Mr. Gates' invitation to address students at two of New York's municipal colleges had been rescinded by diffident authorities—a good example of the conflict between the compromising but powerful political mind and the weakly situated academic mind. As a private institution Columbia is not subject to the pressure of political expediency and Mr. Gates was permitted to speak there on two occasions. The majority of the alumni, however, who noted the appearances of Mr. Gates objected to them, and of their objections Dean Chamberlain commented so well: "Obviously, an institution and its officials do not determine policy in such fundamental matters as this on any such fragile basis as anticipated response from the outside world, including alumni."

IN VIEW OF the practical uselessness of his occupation, exercised in an other-worldly atmosphere of freedom, it is probably not surprising that the academic often feels misunderstood—sometimes by his administration, usually by the general public. In particular the academic mind feels that it is not sufficiently appreciated: at this point the mind becomes practical and concludes that its worth is not high in the market of our society. I think the complaint is not illusory: the public does not appreciate the academic mind because it does not recognize it for what it is. On the other hand, I would hesitate to push the complaint. Perhaps if the public did recognize the academic mind and accepted it at its face value, it would not esteem the academic more but would grow hostile to him and even persecute him.

Probably, therefore, advantage accrues to the academic from the public's ignorance—or more accurately, I suppose, from its refusal to believe that in these critical times the academy itself does not accept as its function the security of the nation, the preparation of young men for jobs, and the provision of the bourgeoisie of this country with more interesting conversation. Consequently a little evasion might be the most practical course for the impractical academic, and such an article as this may be an act of academic sedition. For in the face of the brutishness of commerce, the meretriciousness of the arts, and the disingenuousness of politics, the academic mind should have some interest in its own survival. Were the nation at last made absolutely secure, were discreetly high-paying jobs universally available to well-bred college men, and were middle-class chatter more amusing everywhere, would this be enough, after all, for existence, if there were no academic minds, in dignity and freedom, endlessly dedicated to their useless tasks?

THE SCREEN

ANCIENT MARINER

IF EVER A film caught the flavor of a Hemingway work it is "The Old Man and the Sea." The picture proved to be difficult and very expensive to make, but Producer Leland Hayward didn't distort Hemingway's beautifully written story, which successfully relies upon the visuals and Peter Viertel's good script. No women are introduced to clutter up the simple plot; the only flashbacks are those in which the Old Man vaguely dreams of lions in Africa or when he recalls his successful hand-wrestling with a Negro in Casablanca. The movie is as sparse and simple as Ernest Hemingway's prose.

Much of the film's success is due to the fine performance by Spencer Tracy who looks and acts like Hemingway's elderly fisherman: "everything about him was old except his eyes which were cheerful and undefeated." For eighty-four days he had not caught a fish and when he returns home that night in the Cuban fishing village, he is encouraged only by the Boy. Played with reserve but with warmth by Felipe Pazos, the Boy loves the Old Man, sees to it that he is fed, talks with him and helps him the next day when the Old Man starts out again in the dawn.

Most of the film, like the book, is taken up with the next three days—with the Old Man's getting an enormous marlin on his line, with his struggle to catch this powerful fish that pulls him out to sea, with his determination and success, and then with his greater struggle against the sharks which attack the marlin that is lashed to the boat and which eat away at his prize until the Old Man arrives home exhausted with only the skeleton of his great fish.

John Sturges has done an excellent job of directing his small cast and the photographers (James Wong Howe and others) have caught in lush colors the sea, the village, the Old Man and his struggles with the various fishes. "The Old Man and the Sea" is a film of epic quality in which all departments contributed to its successful whole. What gives the picture its real power is the character of the man—his perseverance, his faith in himself and in God, his love for the boy and his St. Francis-like regard for the creatures of the sea: the flying fish, the dolphins, the awe-inspiring marlin he loves and respects. But most moving of all is his realization, as he arrives at his home harbor, bruised and bleeding after his long struggle, that man can be destroyed but not defeated.

THE FRENCH have sent over a film that also goes in for a great deal of soul-searching. Charles Spaak, who wrote the excellent script for "Crime and Punish-

ment," makes it clear that this is a modern *adaptation* of Dostoevsky's novel; so no one should get bogged down in comparisons. Some comparisons of course are inevitable. The movie is now set in a present-day French city, and the emphasis and importance of some characters are modified. While the protagonist is still the young student-writer who thinks of himself as a privileged genius who is free to murder, this version also concentrates on his family, especially his youthful sister (Ulla Jacobsson) and her wealthy, middle-aged suitor. Bernard Blier plays this unsavory role of the lecher who has an obsession for young girls very well.

Claude Renoir's photography—of the city, of the interiors showing extreme poverty and middle-class stuffiness, and of the tortured characters—is outstanding. And Director Lampin has done very well with his large cast. As the student who first wonders if it matters that he killed a useless old woman but who is finally driven to confess, Robert Hossein gives an interesting but static performance. Marina Vlady, as the heart-of-gold prostitute who convinces the student of the evil of his crime, also carries on in a somewhat dead-pan manner; her bland, beautiful face is striking, but it seldom indicates the pain and sorrow she knows. Considering that "Crime and Punishment" does cover such a wide range of emotional drama and psychological introspection, Director Lampin has left much to understatement; even Gaby Morlay, as the student's saddened mother, and Jean Gabin, as the inspector who plays cat-and-mouse with the student, never seem to get over-excited. The total effect is cerebral; not pure Dostoevsky, it is nevertheless fascinating.

ALSO FROM France comes the Franco-Italian "Premier May," which traces the events that happen to one Parisian family on May Day. The film is talky and too crowded with incidents and characters, but it has its amusing and touching moments, especially in the relationship between the father (beautifully played by Yves Montand) and his eight-year-old son (played with great charm and un-Hollywood realism by young Yves Noel). No doubt Director Luis Saslavsky deserves most of the credit for Master Noel's fine performance, and perhaps for the other good acting in the picture too.

Because the mother is having a baby on this May Day and insists on having it at home, she sends the father and little boy off to a soccer game. On the way the father meets a friend who owes him money and entices him into a gambling house. When this salon of dubious repute is raided, the father sends the youngster home for his identity papers. The boy gets a pick-up from a truck driver (played with bubbling enthusiasm by Aldo Fabrizi) who is delivering the day's traditional lilies-of-the-valley but who forgets about work to become embroiled in the family troubles—which

are plenty, because by the time the boy gets home the mother is having a very difficult time.

Much of this is portrayed with the usual French realism and attention to detail; and the best parts of the picture even have some of the poignancy of "The Bicycle Thief."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

THE STAGE

OF ALIEN WORLDS

MISS MARTHA GRAHAM'S new and elaborate dance meditations on the *Oresteia*, which closed the last season with luster, and Mr. Jerome Robbins' jazz ritual of urban solitudes, which has opened this one in brilliance, are the achievements of artists in their full stretch of passion and expressiveness; together with the gay tumult of the visiting Moiseyev Soviet ensemble, the impact of these occasions, in imagination, in intensity and projection, has exceeded most that our theater offers at any moment of its vulgar and plausible "life."

I am not, of course, a critic of the dance, and any systematic account I might attempt to give of the formal elements at work here would be hazardous, at best impressionism and at worst an irrelevance. What is a possibility, however, and indeed an obligation, both critical and human, is the privilege of recording the quality and stress of life which has provoked such intricate and diverse images of experience, their spiritual comment or point, embodiment, what you will; and what moves one again to wonder, in all of this, is the rich dazzle and multiplicity of forms—each with its various beauty and denial and insistence—by which men represent themselves in time, their tragic labor against evanescence, in itself one of the most beautiful of the forms of human energy. I shall write first of Miss Graham and later of the recent visit of the Moiseyev ensemble, and of Mr. Jerome Robbins' "Ballets: U.S.A.," which are currently being offered at the Alvin Theatre.

Miss Graham's theater of inwardness is, of course, one of the absolute facts of our culture, a gallery of anguish and stone as palpable as any in the American museum of metaphysical horrors. Nothing can deny its authority, though death will challenge that, and indeed this macabre speculation sheds a dark pathos over Miss Graham's rare appearances, for she has no successors: the girls who submit themselves to her in devotion and austerity are artists all, but cannot command her terrible imaginative seduction. It is equally true, as Mr. John Martin observed acutely in a recent commentary, that Miss Graham is indifferent to con-

cepts of heritage or bequest, that nothing distracts her from her theater of single-minded creation, and from the obsessive "now of her inner compulsions." She has, as it were, no solacing hope in "futures," whether of amelioration (a foolishness) or dark apocalypse (what could be worse than what she knows *now*?). Nor is the grace given her of classical exhaustion and relief, the poise of knowledge that forms will endure, even when the light which has flooded them is extinguished, just as Life goes on, though the lives we love, one by one, go out. Everything has happened, and will make again its cyclic return, and must be encountered nakedly, the ecstasy and the immolation. "Why wish to be consoled," Miss Graham would say with Santayana. "I wish rather to mourn perpetually the absence of what I love or might love."

I take Miss Graham's mastering theme to be the tragic drama of egotism, an obsession she shares with Gertrude Stein and Virginia Woolf, with the Emilys Bronte and Dickinson, with Jane Austen and George Eliot and Christina Rossetti and all women of genius, for women must suffer the torment and biological sport of genius; men merely assume it, sublimely unaware, as usual. The constants of egotism—its violence and raw light; harsh, often blind scrutiny and exacerbation of self; the eroticism it will not permit to flower in tenderness or freedom; above all, the solipsistic refusal to know the world but through private revelation, usually of anguish—this is supremely Miss Graham's available substance of life, and in its reenactment, she employs a specific basic vocabulary of movements: a vocabulary (again to draw on Mr. Martin's formal knowledge) which is used interchangeably in lyric, in tragic, meditative or erotic phrases, and which is "a cross-product of her distinctive body and her distinctive mind, intuitively created but developed critically with a logic of her own." Out of that vocabulary, based on its dialectic of tension and release, Miss Graham has fashioned a style and a personality utterly unique in our theater for spiritual audacity: this geometry of feeling, with its broken arcs, tangents, fragments of gesture, may be taken, whatever the dissimilarities of pattern, to be the pictorial and dramatic equivalent of that baroque rhetoric which is the language of the disastrous American visionaries: Melville, Poe, Hawthorne and Miss Dickinson.

Miss Graham would surely wish us to see her new "Clytemnestra," the only evening-length dance drama in her repertory, as a resumption of all the motifs and energies of her obsession, for she has attempted nothing less than an articulation of the whole strangling net of the *Oresteia*: Helen's anarchy, the sacrifice of Iphigenia, Troy in ruins, Agamemnon seduced, the violation of Cassandra, all this widening noose of pride and guilty crime which is the primal imaginative fact in the life of Western man. The ambition is scandalous, and yet

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"Clytemnestra"—harassing, surely too long, conceding nothing to ease, with its neutral, percussive score, its Noguchi décor and dreary text—is still a work of the utmost emotional allure: all its evidence is of involvement, of profound impulse and granite labor of soul. There is, to begin, this matter, first noted by Mr. Stark Young, of the conceptions that feed and qualify Miss Graham's work, "the austere and great light that has come behind many of her figures and gradations of imagery." Miss Graham is not "at home" with the Greeks—an impossible enterprise—but she is compelled by her nature to return to their hard, clear and fatal lines of destiny. Her temperament, which is passionate rather than romantic, erotic rather than sentimental, finds release in the ecstasy and tragic rhythm of consummation; her personality is most richly defined not in terms of private patterns of anxiety and relief, but in the final light of those great figures out of myth and history, the magnitude of whose audacity or guilt or knowledge has burnt out of them all flux of individual psychology, until only massive archetypes of extreme female experience remain: Jocasta, Medea, Clytemnestra now, Emily Bronte and Emily Dickinson, St. Joan even. (The only major, and curious, omissions are Phaedra and Antigone.)

Yet if Miss Graham seems often the priestess of an archaic cult, and her work a dithyramb of primal rites, an encounter with Dionysus, she is also "modern woman, the lost sex," and her theater is the theater of an age of analysis, with Miss Graham the sibyl of reconciliation and acceptance of the warriors within the soul. Her dramas take often this form of journey (their titles stress passage: "Voyage," "Errand into the Maze," "Night Journey") and in "Clytemnestra" she has labored visibly to bring terrible stuffs of guilt and crime into a final design of resolution. It is not yet a secure effort: Miss Graham is not the first artist to fail to give her images of renewal and growth more than a thin, tentative life: not the only artist more at ease with the imagination of disaster than the imagination of love. And yet, to give the lie to what I say, there is also in the repertory Miss Graham's restudied "Seraphic Dialogue," a dance of the vocation and apotheosis of St. Joan, which is all spiritual translucence and unstressed exaltation, one of the few works in modern art which seems to flow unbrokenly out of the still center of faith.

There are moments in this drama of "Clytemnestra" when—again to draw on Mr. Young—"a sense of inadequacy of perception is laid on one as it were . . . when the motif and the effect seem overpresented, and you are reminded of Talleyrand's remark that whatever is exaggerated is insignificant." I may add, perhaps out of a literary bias, that Miss Graham seems intermittently in this elaborate work (and surely out of a noble pride in the resources of her art) to push dance to its

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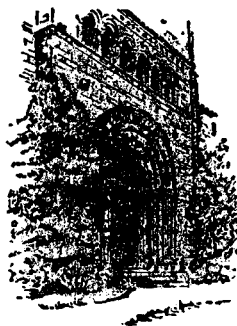
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extremest limits of capacity: which is to say bluntly that Miss Graham might more often employ, in her more complex embodiments and structures of experience, the services of poetry. There is no violation of primacy here, for a text need add only resonance and dilation to what the work images: if the gain would be peripheral in a dance such as "Seraphic Dialogue," which moves in a single trajectory of poetic impulse, it would be immense in "Clytemnestra," where dense themes out of life are invoked, and the "ideas" (a bad term) need a firmer control and definition. The *Oresteia*, after all, weaves a great web of divine justice and civilization out of the bloody net of the House of Atreus, and that is diminished by narrowing its scope to patterns of memory, guilt and reconciliation shuttling in the soul of a passionate woman. Miss Graham, of course, must work within the ethos of her time, and on the strength of impulses and values which alone are viable for her. Nor must one make the vulgar error of counseling her to labor at a restatement of Aeschylus' "truth" (whatever that was) or *the* "truth" (a fiction) or any truth but her own. One suggests only that Miss Graham has not yet found the form in which whatever truth her genius has searched profoundly in the Aeschylus substance may come into its own utter and unassailable reality.

All that as it may be—this "Clytemnestra" is one of the most impressive emotional artifacts in contemporary theatre, truly an enterprise of culture and mastering audacity. The scandal is that we shall not see it again for perhaps another five years, for while the United States Government thinks Miss Graham important enough to send to Warsaw and Japan, she must, unless some foundation turns a generous eye in her direction, while away the years until she can sustain wholly out of her own resources the crippling cost of a fortnight's engagement in New York. Such are the ways of commerce, art and power. I do not know enough of our theater to say what may be Miss Graham's final effect on it, or her lessons for it, if indeed either possibility exists. I know only that when I watch her come on stage, and watch her eyes—"luminous centers of un-American activities," as Mr. Eric Bentley calls them—I think of her lesson for our life, with its multitude of denials and cheating surfaces, lies, obscenities of value, easy drift and tragic flux of waste, and I remember the last lines of that sonnet by Rilke, on the *Archaic Torso of Apollo*:

Else would this stone, disfigured and too small,
stand mute under the shoulders' lucid fall
and not gleam like a great cat's skin, and not

burst out of all its contours, bright
as a great star: there is no spot
that does not see you. You must change your life.

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"FARM BILLS"

Palo Alto, Calif.

TO THE EDITORS: You advanced in your editorial "Farm Bills" (August 22, 1958) the proposition that our farm "surpluses" be disposed of to needy nations abroad through a system of bi-lateral agreements. This proposition is morally perfect as well as economically sound. Nevertheless, it is politically and militarily impossible.

In the circumstances faced by our contemporary world no country would dare depend upon an outside source for such an absolute necessity as food unless that source were close at hand and under the food importer's political control. Under any other conditions the food-importing nation compromises its autonomy even in "normal" times, and in the event of war it risks being starved into submission. Added to this, the United States does not have a particularly good reputation as a generous and dependable importer of foreign goods. Yet the only way we could obtain payment for the "surpluses" we sent abroad is by accepting imports.

As a result of these conditions, it is unlikely that our food "surpluses" will go abroad except as occasional relief shipments. We are faced with the necessity of disposing of our "surplus problem" at home by reorganizing farm production and our distributive system.

CHARLES MARTELL.

"CATHOLIC NATIONS"

Tyrol, Austria.

TO THE EDITORS: In my article "Catholic Nations: Myth or Reality?" [July 11], the deletion of a few lines from my original text resulted in an unfortunate confusion. The conclusion of the article describes the old Carlist peasant and originally carried a reference to "the best of his enemies . . . the anarchists. Of course, some of them were beasts but there were others who were *muy señores*."

The article as printed did not contain this reference to the anarchists and thus the next sentence, "The Sacred Heart, the Black Banner with skull and crossbones. . . ," seemed to make the Carlists carriers of the anarchist flag. What was intended was a suggestion of something approaching the Catholic synthesis—"Love, Death and Freedom." This is, I think, a very important point and one that should be clarified for your readers.

ERIK VON KUEHNELT-LEDDIHN.

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OUR FRIEND JAMES JOYCE. By Mary and Padraic Colum. Doubleday. \$4.

By MARVIN MAGALANER

JAMES JOYCE has been more fortunate than D. H. Lawrence in his choice of literary friends. Accounts in books of Joyce the man, which began with Padraic Colum's *The Road round Ireland* many years ago, have been almost uniformly restrained, informative, and sympathetic. Frank Budgen's description of Joyce during the making of *Ulysses*, J. F. Byrne's *Silent Years*, Mary Colum's *Life and the Dream*, and the recent *My Brother's Keeper* by Stanislaus Joyce, have sought to keep the record straight by showing Joyce in historical perspective as an extremely human being.

Now Padraic and the late Mary Colum, lifelong friends of Joyce, have set down their reminiscences

of the author of *Ulysses*. Much of what they have to say is not new to literary specialists, for the Colums have been providing Joyceans with relevant information for at least a quarter-century. And there are occasional small inaccuracies. (It was Yeats, not A.E., who wondered aloud in a letter to Joyce, paraphrasing Dr. Johnson, whether the young writer would turn out to be a fountain or a cistern.) In spite of the repetitions and the occasional haziness of detail, however, the book is very valuable as a considered evaluation of Joyce by two utterly sincere and sensitive countrymen who knew him well.

Like Stanislaus Joyce's memoir, this book is thoroughly honest. There is no attempt to glorify its subject. Joyce was afraid of thunderstorms; he wasted money—sometimes other people's money; he did not give sufficient attention

to his daughter Lucia until she was emotionally almost beyond aid; he was unfair to Sylvia Beach, the publisher of *Ulysses*, in suspecting that she was taking financial advantage of him. The Colums can admit all this, yet find in the man an essential dignity, charm, and sympathy that ugly details do not destroy.

Joyce comes out of it surprisingly well as a citizen of the world. Though Marxists and Irish nationalists have castigated him for his flight to Europe when Ireland needed all her sons in the struggle for independence, the Colums insist convincingly on his essential patriotism and his sincere desire for a free Ireland. Similarly, the view that Joyce considered himself above politics and world events is refuted by his deep resentment of the appeasement at Munich and by his desire to help a Jewish family escape the Nazis. As the Colums

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Aron Gurwitsch, of Brandeis University, says in the Preface: "... Father Lauer has rendered a valuable service to both the cause of phenomenology and American philosophy."

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point out, a reticence to discuss political subjects is far different from a lack of interest in them.

As a friend, Joyce was apparently loyal and considerate almost to a fault. He drowned sick acquaintances in gifts of wine. For John Sullivan, though he hardly knew him, he campaigned strenuously, using all his influence to advance the opera singer's career. But the shoe was usually on the other foot. Joyce attracted a circle of intimates—especially in his Paris days—who exerted themselves on his behalf far beyond the limits of ordinary friendship. Paul Léon, Eugene and Maria Jolas, Robert MacAlmon, the Colums and others often subordinated the demands of their own careers to the needs of the almost-blind genius. The book discusses the reciprocal relationships of this period with simplicity and intelligence.

The second half of *Our Friend James Joyce*—the section dealing with Joyce's life in Paris—seems more valuable than the section devoted to the young artist in Ireland. This is perhaps because most of the

material on the early period has already been published and is here merely recapitulated. The fascinating view of Joyce as husband and father, especially his attempt to help his daughter Lucia, is the first to avoid shadowy implications and present the situation candidly. Here the Colums have been brilliantly successful, the more so since they themselves were directly involved in the attempt to rehabilitate the unhappy girl. Their extended treatment of this delicate subject is a model of biographical frankness and good taste.

A memoir is no place, perhaps, for literary criticism. Consequently, the Colums have avoided discussion of Joyce's works. This is a pity, for their Irish background, their international literary reputation, and their friendship with Joyce qualify them uniquely to criticize his fiction. What they have done, however, is to lighten the task of future critics by bringing together a mass of biographical evidence on which subsequent critical interpretations will be based.

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novel and something of a composer too, though with no great achievement, he is the sort of cautious but overwhelmable bachelor Mr. Sansom has begun to affect. The B is Marie, "a walnut of a mouse," to use one of the metaphors of animalization common in the book. She is secretary to a small investment trust and her economic emancipation is paralleled, it would seem, by a comparable freedom in morality.

C, the dented end of the triangle, is Colin. An anarchistic individual, Marie's ex-fiancé but no more to her now than an object of pity, he is futile, irresponsible, vaguely an artist but most decidedly a taker of things which do not belong to him. His excuse for being is neither Emerson's for the rhodora nor Shaw's for the knavish genius called Dubedat. It is merely that of the receiver of charity who toils not nor spins but gives others the dubious pleasure of supporting him in the style to which he is accustomed.

As skeleton at the love feast of the jazz player and Marie, he disturbs them no end in London. And when some difficulty over a new case of his stealing arises, he goes to them even to the Scilly Isles where they are enjoying what must charitably be called a trial marriage. A memorable episode is that in which he is about to drown as he lies drunk at the water's edge. At the last moment he is saved by the jazz player who, for all his selfish interests, can still be said to symbolize the good Samaritan everywhere.

"Whenever a man is down," comments Mr. Sansom in an earlier connection, "there is always someone to pick him up: that is the charitable truth of our times." Gibe or not, it is true for Colin. Incubus that he is to his two benefactors, they both know equally at last that whether the explanation is in Christianity or in herd instinct, in diabolism or in some fashionable motive, he is their responsibility, and that his jailing by officers who have caught up with him can be no more than a period of relative peace for them.

The realization is of course a social maturing on their part. Not



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surprisingly it leads to something significant in a personal sphere: they agree to stop dallying with each other and to get married as true seekers of one another's happiness commonly will.

If this interweaving of love and charity (duty) in the Welfare State has nothing to do with the surrealism which has typed much of Mr. Sansom's fiction since the writing of *Fireman Flower*, it does, however, pertain to the analytical realism which informs another part of his canon, say that represented by *The Body* or *The Loving Eye*. As such, of course, it snares very acceptably the "truth to human experience" and "effect of life" which W. D. Howells, as a recent publication by The New York Public Library tells us, gave so much thought to in his latter days.

It has a more mediate value for the history of thought: in a very positive way it makes *The Cautious Heart* a contribution to that re-sensencing of traditional values which has quietly been gathering force these past years.

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WE ARE ALWAYS interested when a distinguished artist turns to criticism; but we read Eliot on poetry or Forster on the novel with a special kind of expectation, that in the end, when we have read what they have to say, we will know more about Eliot and Forster than about poetry and the novel. And usually we are right, for the artist-critic is generally his own apologist, trying, as Eliot says, "to defend the kind of poetry he is writing, or to formulate the kind that he wants to write."

The case of Robert Penn Warren is rather different. In the first place, it would not be quite accurate to say that in his *Selected Essays* he has "turned to criticism"; he has been writing criticism all along (the

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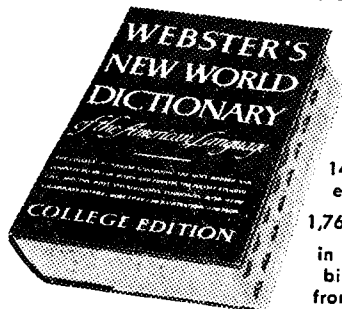


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earliest essay in this collection is dated four years before his first novel, and the rest are spread over a period of almost twenty years). And in the second place, these essays cannot be taken merely as footnotes to his own literary practice; the book is important in its own right, not for what it reveals about the author of *All the King's Men* and *Promises*, but for what it reveals about the nature of literature, and the proper practice of criticism. It is the best book of its kind to appear in several years.

The importance of Mr. Warren as a critic should be clear to anyone who has studied or taught English literature in the last twenty-five years. He has influenced the direction of American critical thought in two important ways: by editing (with Cleanth Brooks) the *Southern Review*, a literary and critical quarterly which is still, twenty years after its demise, the best quarterly this country has had; and by writing (again with Brooks) *Understanding Poetry*, a textbook which taught a generation of students how to read, and established a critical method still dominant in our classrooms.

These essays are the occasional critical work of that same period, and it is an indication of Mr. Warren's importance that, though they have not previously been collected, many are already famous and much anthologized. Gathered together, they are impressive evidence of the range and sensitivity of Mr. Warren's critical mind. Of the ten essays, four are on fellow Southerners—Faulkner, Katherine Anne Porter, Eudora Welty and Thomas Wolfe—though the critical approach is not regionalistic. Other essays examine works by Hemingway, Robert Frost, Melville and Conrad; and two are concerned with poetic theory—one the well-known "Pure and Impure Poetry," the other a long and brilliant study of the symbolism of *The Ancient Mariner*.

In all these essays Mr. Warren is concerned with questions of value and meaning, and the writers that interest him tend to be those that can be called philosophical writers. "The philosophical novelist, or

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poet," Mr. Warren writes, "is one for whom the documentation of the world is constantly striving to rise to the level of generalization about values, for whom the image strives to rise to symbol, for whom images always fall into a dialectical configuration, for whom the urgency of experience, no matter how vividly and strongly experience may enchant, is the urgency to know the meaning of experience." In this sense Mr. Warren is both a philosophical novelist and a philosophical poet; he believes, with Dante (whom he quotes on this point), that the temporal end of man is the conquest of knowledge. And he is also a philosophical critic, for it is this conquest of experience, this urgency to know, which attracts his critical attention. Thus in Hemingway he finds a "world with nothing at center," and he examines this world for the foundations of value it may offer. With each author, it is the meaning and not the experience which is important.

But at the same time Mr. Warren is always aware that art is *not* philosophy, and that the knowledge it offers cannot be found in direct statements or in paraphrases, and he returns constantly and carefully to the complex of interrelationships and tensions within the work itself, and discovers the meaning there. So that, while the *Selected Essays* are in a sense philosophical, they are also a celebration of the creative imagination, which can embody the meaning of experience in symbolic forms which are eternally significant.

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year-and-a-half of their marriage—until the birth of Shane, their first child. The subtitle of the book—"Eugene O'Neill as a young man in love"—gives an indication of the tone and content of Miss Boulton's memoir. Gushy and garrulous, the author colors the events she recounts with a sickly patina that seems to be a mixture of O'Neill's bombastic brooding and the saccharine joy of the ladies' magazines, for which Miss Boulton used to turn out formula fiction.

There is very little in the volume that is of real value to anyone seriously interested in O'Neill as a playwright, simply because there is very little in the book that one can believe. There are pages and pages of dialogue, of drunken conversations held forty years ago, that only total recall, a stenographic record or a tape recorder could reproduce. Miss Boulton vaguely mentions notes and diaries at one point, but it is incredible that she should have made any kind of record of long, maudlin exchanges (like those in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*) between O'Neill and his brother Jamie. Sometimes the speeches that she puts into her husband's mouth sound like variations on those in his plays (anyone with a good ear and a little knowledge of the man could write them); at other times they sound like lines from sentimental fiction—"Aggie—my own wonderful little wife." (*Little*, incidentally, is one of Miss Boulton's favorite adjectives.)

The memoir is sprinkled with hushed references to remarks or events that are supposed to herald later plays. Sometimes with characters or places that she knows well this is legitimate, but often it is sheer theatricality. O'Neill is supposed to have shouted drunkenly, "The iceman cometh," at a party shortly after their first meeting, but the shout is more likely an *ex post facto* offspring of the play than it is the accurate report of a dim suggestion of a play that still lay twenty years in the future. Miss Boulton not only remembers what people said, she also remembers the way light fell through windows, what furniture sat where in what rooms,

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what she cooked for meals that were or were not eaten. Such circumstantiality is obviously her attempt to give a finished form to the story that she wants to tell, but the surface fiction throws suspicion on her picture of the man and his behavior.

Although she intends speaking mainly of her relationship with O'Neill, Miss Boulton does spice her book with familiar names—Susan Glaspell, George Cram Cook, Louis Wolheim. The figures are shadowy, insufficiently defined, tricked out in adjectival conventions: "Dear little Alice Ullman, with her gay, pretty face and quick mind. . . ." The author has nothing of interest to say about the Provincetown Players, although these were their most important years, because—as she cheerfully admits—she never knew what anyone was talking about when they discussed the problems of the group and she was so uninterested in the whole thing that she never really listened to theatrical conversation. As a result, the two-part drama that she has written for herself and O'Neill is acted out against a busy but indistinct backdrop.

The one thing that does come through in the book is a picture of O'Neill as a self-absorbed, unpleasant man, moving nervously between his two narcotics—whiskey and work. This is obviously an incomplete picture of O'Neill (he did, after all, write the plays), but it is probably a valid one. Only to that extent is *Part of a Long Story* interesting. For the most part, it is an over-written, over-padded novel about this moody Irish type and this sweet New Jersey farm girl who meet in this Bohemian bar and. . .

REVIEWERS

Marvin Magalaner is co-author, with Richard M. Kain, of *Joyce, The Man, The Work, The Reputation*.

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